

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Claims 19-24 and 30 have been cancelled. Claims 1-18, 25-29 and 31-42 remain pending. The remarks below addressing the rejection of claims are directed to the claims as amended herein.

***Statement of Substance of Interview with Examiner:***

An interview was conducted on March 21, 2006 between the Examiner and applicant's representatives Ronald Shea and Charles Shemwell. Specifically, the Examiner was asked where she understood the references cited in the Office Action to show multiple priority blocks in the same row for storing priority bits. The Examiner directed applicant's representatives to Fig. 5 of Williams, which shows a single priority field 517, the bits of which are not distributed across multiple fields within the row "ENTRY 1." It was proposed that select claims be amended to further clarify that the priority bits of a single priority word are distributed across multiple priority blocks within a row. The Examiner indicated that this clarification would be helpful, but that further searching might be necessary. Claim 9 was also discussed in conjunction with applicant's Figure 44 depicting filtering logic 4361 that segmented a match line of the priority index table between priority blocks.

**Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

Claims 1-4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,914,956 to Williams ("Williams") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,706,224 to Srinivasan ("Srinivasan").

Independent claim 1 recites, in part:

a partitioned priority index table having a plurality of rows and columns of priority blocks, the priority blocks of each row for storing a respective portion of a priority

number associated with an entry in the CAM array and each column having compare logic coupled to each of the priority blocks in its respective column;

As discussed above, Williams does not show a plurality of rows and columns of priority blocks, the priority blocks of each row for storing a respective portion of a priority number, and applicant submits that Srinivasan does not disclose this element either. Therefore, even if Williams and Srinivasan could be combined in the manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination still would not include every element of claim 1, and therefore, would not establish a prima facie case for obviousness.

For at least these reasons, applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable over the combination of Williams and Srinivasan, and that claims 2 through 4, which depend from, and further limit claim 1, are also allowable over the teachings of Williams, Srinivasan, and their combination.

Claims 5-6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Williams in view of Srinivasan, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,377,855 to Lavi ("Lavi").

Because claims 5 and 6 depend from independent claim 1, they necessarily include the limitation of:

a partitioned priority index table having a plurality of rows and columns of priority blocks, the priority blocks of each row for storing a respective portion of a priority number associated with an entry in the CAM array and each column having compare logic coupled to each of the priority blocks in its respective column;

As discussed in conjunction with claim 1, neither Williams nor Srinivasan disclose or suggest this limitation, and applicant submits that Lavi does not disclose or suggest this limitation either. Therefore, even if Williams, Srinivasan and Lavi could be combined in the

manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination still would not include every limitation of claims 5 and 6, and therefore, would not establish a prima facie case for obviousness.

For at least these reasons, applicant submits that claims 5 and 6 are allowable over the combination of Williams, Srinivasan, and Lavi.

Claims 7, 15-18, 20 and 25 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Lavi in view of Williams. Claim 17 inadvertently repeated the substance of claim 12, and has been cancelled. Claim 20 inadvertently repeated the substance of claim 9, and has been cancelled. Claim 18 has been amended to depend from claim 12, and remains dependent from independent claim 7.

Independent claim 7 recites, in part,

each priority number from the first plurality of priority numbers having bits distributed within at least two of the priority blocks in the first row

Applicant submits that, for reasons discussed in conjunction with claims 1 and 5, neither Lavi nor Williams disclose or suggest a limitation where each priority number from the first plurality of priority numbers having bits distributed within at least two of the priority blocks in the first row. Accordingly, even if Williams and Lavi could be combined in a manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination would still lack every element of independent claim 7, and would therefore not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, claim 7, and claims 15-16, 18, and 25, which depend from and further limit independent claim 7, are not obvious over Lavi in view of Williams.

Claims 8-14, 19, and 21-24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lavi in view of Williams in further view of Srinivasan. Claims 19 and 21-24 inadvertently repeated the substance of claims 11, 13, 14, 9 and 14, and have been cancelled.

Claims 8-14 depend from, and further limit independent claim 7, they necessarily include the limitation of:

each priority number from the first plurality of priority numbers having bits distributed within at least two of the priority blocks in the first row

Applicant submits that, for reasons discussed in conjunction with claims 1 and 5, neither Lavi, Williams, nor Srinivasan disclose or suggest this limitation. Accordingly, even if Lavi, Williams, and Srinivasan could be combined in a manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination would still lack every limitation of claims 8-14 and therefore, would not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, applicant submits that claims 8-14 are allowable over Lavi in view of Williams, further in view of Srinivasan.

Claims 26-27 and 30-32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Williams in view of Lavi. Claim 31 has been cancelled.

Independent Claim 26 recites, in part,

a first priority block in a first row that compares a first plurality of bits of a first plurality of priority numbers including a first priority number having bits distributed in at least two priority blocks in the first row and determines a block priority number (BPN) for the first priority block;

Applicant submits that, for reasons discussed above, neither Williams nor Lavi disclose or suggest a limitation including a first priority block including a first priority number having bits distributed in at least two priority blocks in the first row. Accordingly, even if Williams and Lavi could be combined in a manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination would still lack every limitation of claims independent claim 26, and therefore would still not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, applicant submits that independent claim 26, and claims 27, 30 and 32, which depend from and further limit independent claim 26,

are allowable over Williams in view of Lavi.

Claims 40-42 were also rejected over Williams in view of Lavi. Because claims 41-42 depend from, and further limit independent claim 40, they necessarily include the limitation:

a first row of priority blocks that stores a first plurality of priority numbers, each of the first plurality of priority number having bits in at least two of the priority blocks in the first row;

Applicant submits that, for reasons discussed above, neither Williams nor Lavi disclose or suggest a first plurality of priority numbers, each of the first plurality of priority number having bits in at least two of the priority blocks in the first row. Accordingly, applicant submits that even if Williams and Lavi could be combined in a manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination would still lack the above recited limitation, and therefore could not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, applicant submits that claims 40-42 are allowable over Williams, Lavi, and their combination.

Claims 28-29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Williams in view of Lavi in further view of Srinivasan. Because claims 28-29 depend from, and further limit independent claim 26, they necessarily include the limitation:

a first priority block in a first row that compares a first plurality of bits of a first plurality of priority numbers including a first priority number having bits distributed in at least two priority blocks in the first row and determines a block priority number (BPN) for the first priority block

Applicant submits that, for reasons discussed above, neither Williams Lavi, nor Srinivasan disclose or suggest a limitation including a first priority number having bits distributed in at least two priority blocks in the first row. Accordingly, even if Williams, Lavi, and Srinivasan could be combined in a manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination

would still lack every limitation of claims 28-29, and therefore, would not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, applicant submits that claims 28-29 are allowable over Williams in view of Lavi, further in view of Srinivasan.

Claims 33-36 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Srinivasan.

Independent claim 33 recites, in part:

determining a most significant block priority number (MSBPN) for a first column from the first and second BPNs, wherein the first plurality priority numbers includes a first priority number having bits distributed within at least two priority blocks in a same row

Applicant submits that, for reasons discussed in conjunction with claim 1, Williams does not disclose or suggest the limitation of a first priority number having bits distributed within at least two priority blocks in a same row. Accordingly, applicant submits that claims 33-36 are not obvious in view of Srinivasan, and are therefore allowable over Srinivasan.

Claims 37-39 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Srinivasan in view of Lavi. Because claims 37-39 depend from, and further limit independent claim 33, they necessarily include the limitation:

determining a most significant block priority number (MSBPN) for a first column from the first and second BPNs, wherein the first plurality priority numbers includes a first priority number having bits distributed within at least two priority blocks in a same row

Applicant submits that, for reasons discussed above, neither Srinivasan nor Lavi disclose or suggest the limitation of a first priority number having bits distributed within at least two priority blocks in a same row. Accordingly, applicant submits that even if Srinivasan and Lavi could be combined in a manner suggested by the Examiner, their combination would still lack

the above recited limitation, and therefore could not establish a prima facie case for obviousness. For at least these reasons, applicant submits that claims 37-39 are allowable over Srinivasan, Lavi, and their combination.

***Conclusion***

Applicant submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. If a telephone interview would be helpful in any way, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Authorization is hereby given to charge deposit account 50-1914 for any fee deficiency associated with this Response.

Respectfully submitted

SHEMWELL MAHAMED I LLP

Dated: 30 March 2006

By: 

Ronald R. Shea, Reg. No. 45,098  
Tel. 408-236-6638